



City of Davison

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October 28, 1997

Mr. William Kennard
Chairman Designate
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Ex Parte Letter Re:

Cases WT97-¹⁹²~~197~~, MM Docket 97-182 / DA 96-2140 

Dear Chairman Kennard:

Please terminate all action in the preceding cases. They attempt to make the F.C.C. the "Federal Zoning Commission" for cellular and broadcast towers and violate the intent of Congress, the Constitution and principles of Federalism.

Congress and the courts have long recognized that zoning is a matter of peculiarly local concern. The F.C.C. has no zoning knowledge or expertise and is not accessible to most citizens.

For those reasons and others, Congress expressly preserved local zoning authority over cellular towers in the 1996 Act. Now the F.C.C. is trying to get this jurisdiction back by issuing rules which improperly infringe on local zoning authority.

The F.C.C.'s efforts to assume jurisdiction over any local zoning matter where RF radiation is mentioned is unacceptable. The F.C.C. ignores the fact that we cannot necessarily control the statements citizens make during meetings of our legislative bodies. Many municipalities, by state or local law, are required to allow citizens to speak on any topic they wish, even items that are not on the agenda. This is part of what local government is all about.

Some of our citizens may be concerned about radiation from cellular towers. For the reasons just described, we cannot necessarily prevent them from mentioning their concerns to us. The F.C.C.'s attempt to use this as a means to seize zoning authority and reverse local decisions

violates basic principles of Federalism, Freedom of Speech and the rights of our citizens to petition their government.

This is particularly true if a municipality expressly says it is not considering such statements (that go beyond the radiation authority Congress left with municipalities) and the decision is completely valid on other grounds, such as the impact of the tower on the property values or aesthetics.

For similar reasons, the F.C.C. cannot "second guess" the reasons for a municipality's decision. The F.C.C., like the courts, is bound by the stated reasons given by a municipality. Either these reasons are sufficient to uphold the decision or they are not. The F.C.C. cannot "second guess" a municipality's true reasons any more than the courts can "second guess" the true reasons for the F.C.C.'s decisions.

The F.C.C.'s proposal to ban moratoria on cellular towers is objectionable for many of the reasons set forth above. It also fails to recognize that for some municipalities moratoria are a well-recognized zoning tool, particularly while they revise zoning ordinances. More importantly, Congress took away the F.C.C.'s authority over cellular tower zoning and this includes moratoria.

Similarly, please terminate the F.C.C.'s proposed rulemaking preempting local zoning of broadcast towers. As you well know, broadcast towers can be over 2,000 feet high -- they are some of the tallest structures known to man. It is therefore astounding that you would propose that municipalities can't consider the impact of such towers on property values, the environment or aesthetics and that even safety considerations take second place. Safety always should be the first priority.

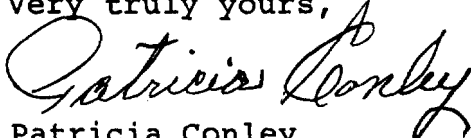
And setting artificial time limits for municipalities to act on environmental, zoning and building permit approvals for such towers serve no useful purpose. It is a violation of the U.S. Constitution, the Communications Act and Federalism for you to place time limits on municipalities to act on all local approvals and then state that all such applications will be automatically deemed granted if we don't act within this time frame, even if the application is incomplete or violates state or local law.

The F.C.C. should consider how it would react if it was told that any broadcast license application would be automatically deemed granted unless the F.C.C. acted on it within 21 to 45 days; that this rule applies whether or not the application was complete, whether or not the applicant was foreign or domestically owned or otherwise qualified; or even whether the frequencies were available. And the rule

would apply without regard to whether the tower for the station was at the end of an airport runway, or in a wetland or historic district.

For these reasons, the proposed actions violate the Communications Act and the Constitution. Please terminate all these proceedings without taking the actions proposed therein.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Patricia Conley". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Patricia Conley
Legislative Coordinator
City of Davison